I chose to reserve my comments until I could report on the "observed" interference generated by BPL. Using my ICOM 706MKIIG and a screwdriver antenna I "observed" the affects of BPL first hand at two locations in the Fuquay-Varina area (near Raleigh, North Carolina). This coincidentally is the same area Mr. Powell visited during his examination of the Progress Energy field trial. It is my understanding he was invited to listen to the interference firsthand, but due to time constraints was unable to do so. I submit this document for his greater edification.

While industry reports suggest that the interference from BPL is at or below the noise floor my observations, in layman's terms, put the interference in a range between a low drown and intolerable varying with the type of distribution system used and relative proximity to the source. Driving throughout the subdivision and surrounding area, produced results consistently within these findings. At times weaker signals were totally obliterated.

As I understand it, BPL employs a frequency agile design, allowing it to utilize different "swaths" of spectrum to avoid interfering with licensed services. Again through "observation" Progress Energy has attempted to reassign carriers outside frequencies licensed to the Amateur Radio Service, yet they have not been entirely successful. If I may assume Progress Energy would very much like to avoid amateur frequencies, and our complaints, I must surmise the BPL equipment used has limited ability to mitigate the interference.

Interference has now been reported in portions of the forty and eighty meter bands used for emergency communications. As the Assistant Emergency Coordinator for the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, I would like to relate my experience during Hurricane Isabel and the role these bands played in alleviating potential suffering.

I was dispatched to assist with emergency communications in both Swan Quarter and Hertford, North Carolina, the latter being without police, fire or rescue communications due to a tower collapse. Two meters played a major role in providing local communications with police, fire and relief efforts, but our only means of communications with the State EOC was through HF radio on frequencies 3923 (80 meters) & 7232 (40 meters). As a member of Army MARS, and Emergency Coordinator for Region 4, frequencies in the 40 and 80 meter bands were also used. The nature of the event presented less then ideal operating conditions, power from emergency generators and inferior antennas. Combined they caused induced noise and degraded receive signals and, it is my belief, the constant carrier background noise generated by BPL would have exacerbated an already tenuous situation.

I believe I have demonstrated, at least to myself, interference does exist due to the deployment of BPL. The real question is a matter of semantics, and what constitutes "harmful" interference. This question may only be answered when Amateur Radio is once again called upon to serve during a disaster. My only hope is we won't have to experience loss of life or property to make the point.

Thank You for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely;

Kenneth J Slough
K7UGT/AAV4PA
AEC North Carolina Division of Emergency Management
NC Army MARS Emergency Coordinator Region 4